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Some recent Communist intelligence operations run from East Berlin.

PORTHOLE TO THE WEST

One of the reasons the United States is so belligerent about West Berlin, the Soviets charge, is that the NATO countries have made the city their most active "hotbed of espionage and subversion against the Socialist camp," or, taken out of propagandistic language, their most useful intelligence window to the East. Could be; but every shoe has its mate, and one of the reasons the Communists were for so long reluctant to cut their losses by sealing the border between sectors must have been the crimp it would put into *East* Berlin's most influential big business—intelligence activity. In addition to the locally ubiquitous East German services, four distinct Soviet intelligence services and at least one from every other Bloc country are there. Some four score intelligence establishments have been located and identified in midcity, Pankow, and around the suburbs, most notably in Karlshorst, where five or six hundred Soviet officers have a fifty-acre compound to themselves. From these offices has streamed a torrent of intelligence operations ranging from garden-variety espionage to kidnapping and assassination. The reader is invited to sample them in the following case sketches drawn from the past few years.

Dearly Beloved

Eleanor was an American girl working in a U.S. office in Bonn last year. She was ripe for romance, and Europe was the place to find it. At the Embassy Club she met Paul, a naturalized American who retained the old-world charm that always draws a knot of women. Nevertheless he had eyes only for her, and in the succeeding weeks time only for her. Soon it was more than a gay romance; it was the real once-in-a-lifetime thing. They were going to be married. But not for several weeks; right now he had to go to West Berlin.

In West Berlin Paul lived with a German friend. He wrote or telephoned every day. But one day it was the friend that telephoned: Paul had had a serious automobile accident and

was in an East Berlin Hospital. Eleanor tried to reach him by phone; failed; tried again; failed; again; no good. Red tape. Then a letter from him: broken bones, but he would quite recover. Would she visit him? Tender meeting of the betrothed in the East Sector hospital. He would have to stay there some ten days more; could she come again next week? Certainly she could.

During the sweet sorrow of farewell on her second visit, Paul handed her a boxed roll of film and asked her to take it to his friend in West Berlin. As she stepped from the hospital door she was arrested by security police on charges of espionage. She was driven to a safe house, stripped, and searched. The film was developed: pictures of East German military equipment! She was taken to the Soviet headquarters in Karlshorst, where she found Paul also in custody. He was manly about it, concentrating on making them understand that she knew nothing of the contents of the film. After some hours of interrogation they gave her a few compassionate minutes alone with him. Abashed, he confessed that he was working for a Western intelligence service and was now in bad trouble; he only hoped they would let her off lightly.

She was taken back to the safe house, where a Soviet officer who had been put in charge of the case talked earnestly to her, emphasizing the seriousness of her fiancé's crime to which she was accessory. The only hope for him was somehow to expiate the damage done with an equivalent good deed. And she did happen to be in this respect in a fortunate position; didn't there pass through her office in Bonn coded telegrams concerning the U.S. position on Berlin and policy toward the USSR? These were not of the same value as photographs of military equipment, of course, but given good faith on her part one could afford to be generous. The distraught girl eagerly grasped this chance to save her loved one. She signed a statement of obligation to the Soviet intelligence service and was escorted to the West Berlin border.

Flying back to Bonn, however, Eleanor began to shrink from the prospect of stealing secret papers even to save Paul. How could she be sure that they would release him if she did? As soon as she got to the office she told her supervisor the whole story. It didn't take investigators long to find that Paul was

no American citizen and no Western intelligence agent, but a Soviet one, the lure in an elaborate play to compromise a frail American with good access to communications, and that the Soviet officer who struck the bargain with her was Y. A. Zaostrovtsev, who two years earlier had been suspected of similar activities as second secretary of the Soviet embassy in Washington and asked to leave the country.

Sports Flyer

On New Year's Day of 1959 a small civilian sports plane in trouble crash-landed in the Kiel Canal. The pilot was seen to reach the bank uninjured, but then dive back into the icy water and retrieve a briefcase from the wreck. He gave his name as Richard Brueggert, of nearby Neumuenster. The German authorities, suspecting a connection between the importance he attached to his briefcase and the fact that during the previous autumn this same plane had been identified making repeated flights over maneuvers being conducted in the area by the West German army, did some investigating and questioning of Herr Brueggert. They got quite a story.

Richard was a native Neumuenster lad. When he turned nineteen, at about the time Von Paulus was reaching the Volga north of Stalingrad and Rommel stood before El Alamein, he was inducted into the Luftwaffe. In time he got himself into the coveted pilot training course, but his ambition to fly real missions was thwarted by the end of the war. Ragged postwar Germany saw him without pilot experience, mostly jobless, and engaged to a girl from Saxony, Erna Hillmann. In 1946, in spite of poor financial prospects, he married Erna, worked a while on a farm there in the east, then took her back to Neumuenster and eked out a living for the next ten years with temporary jobs as joiner and chauffeur. He wanted above all else to fly.

In the summer of 1956, when he had been working for a year as joiner for German Service Organization 520 in Hamburg, Brueggert came across a copy of *Flugsport*, an amateur pilots' magazine published by the East German Sport and Technology Society. He wrote to the Society and arranged to have future issues mailed to him. At about this time he lost his GSO job.

Early in 1957, through the good offices of the Sport and Technology Society, he got a letter from a fellow aviation enthusiast named Paul Soltau in East Berlin, and they struck up quite a correspondence. In March Soltau invited him, unemployed now for nine months, to come to East Berlin and talk about a job in sports flying. His luck had changed, at last, and in a holiday mood he took off with his wife Erna. Soltau was apparently embarrassed by her presence, but he carried it off well, he took them to Saxony and while she visited her family the two men had their talk.

After satisfying himself that Brueggert was fed up with the freedom of economic and aeronautic opportunity in the Federal Republic, Soltau revealed that he was a military intelligence officer (but not his real name, Major Ernst Beyer) and asked detailed questions about the strength, arms, and personnel of the German Service Organization, and whether it was likely to be integrated into the regular armed forces. He was pleased with the extent of Richard's knowledge. Could he get a copy of the Air Force manual? There would indeed be a "sports flying" job for him, but first he should have training in photographic techniques and could do some practicing with useful ground photography. Here was DM 200 for the GSO report; his pay would be doubled when he got to flying. Brueggert signed a pledge to carry out assignments as agent for the Democratic Republic. His cover name would be "Ruth."

In the following twenty-one months before his crash, "Ruth" furnished ground and aerial photographs of port and shipyard installations in Kiel and Hamburg, of barracks, rifle ranges, ammunition depots, railroad stations, and airfields in Neumuenster, Boostedt, Rendsburg, Schleswig, Flensburg, Leck, and Schwesing, and of highways, bridges, and town and city layouts in the area. He reconnoitered the NATO training grounds at Todendorf to observe remote-controlled flying models being tested there. On the side, he spotted members of the armed forces who might be recruited as agents. Although he usually chartered planes for his air missions, he bought himself a second-hand Auster in England, the one he later crashed. He set up a "detective agency" which conveniently shared

office space with a photo studio and shop run by his best friend, Peter Wingert, who had been a Luftwaffe photographer.

Although Brueggert had been given two letter-drop addresses by which he could communicate with Major Beyer, his photographic reports of course had to be conveyed in person, and as his activity increased this meant a dangerous amount of travel for him. So he let Erna in on the secret and took her to East Berlin to be signed up, at Fichtestrasse 11, as an intelligence courier. She had no particular political convictions and was happy to be able to increase the family income. Between them they made about sixteen trips to Berlin before the crash, carrying the reports in a hollow umbrella handle or in eviscerated oranges, rolls, or cookie packages.

Richard and Erna and their friend Peter Wingert were tried for espionage. Wingert, because the only witness against him, Brueggert, refused to confirm what he had said under interrogation, that Wingert not only knew all about the business but had met with Major Beyer in East Berlin, had prepared reports for him, and had been paid for them, was released for lack of evidence. Erna Brueggert was sentenced to nine months in prison. Richard was convicted, told the investigating judge, "When the Federal Republic falls I personally will pull the rope that hangs you" and was given two and a half years.

Secretary to the Chief

In 1960 it became apparent that the East German intelligence services must have a high-level source in the Federal Republic's Defense Ministry. Investigators found a trail that led to the office of the deputy naval chief, Admiral Wagner, and to his efficient 30-year-old secretary. In October Rosalie Kunze was arrested and confessed.

A Pomeranian girl, Rosalie had been recruited by the East German service in Dresden in 1954 under a threat to expose the illegal abortion she had just undergone. She was taken to East Berlin and given extensive safe-house training in secret writing, radio communications, photography, and other clandestine techniques. In 1955, equipped with a fictitious background legend and falsified documents, she was sent to

the Federal Republic. By 1956 she had succeeded, as instructed, in getting a job in the Defense Ministry. Here she had access to Secret and NATO Secret material, and after 1958, when she had worked her way up to a position in the top command, she handled Top Secret documents as well.

Through East Berlin cover addresses, dead drops in West Germany, and couriers she kept in contact and arranged regular meetings to pass on orally or in writing the closely guarded secrets of the West and to receive new assignments, submit expense accounts, and take additional training. Sometimes she went in person to East Berlin, sometimes met with another agent in the West, one Horst Friedrich Schoetzki, alias Martin Kiessler, who would then report to East Berlin.

Shortly before her arrest Rosalie had served as secretary to high staff officers participating in the NATO "Flashback" maneuvers at Baumholder. She still had with her the notes she had made on atomic weapons used in the exercises; she had planned to pass them to Schoetzki at a meeting they had scheduled a few days later. Arriving for this meeting Schoetzki was also arrested, and a search of his quarters turned up microdot equipment, undeveloped minox film, concealment devices, and other paraphernalia of espionage. He too confessed, and the information furnished by the pair enabled the authorities to run to earth six other agents of the East German service.

Art Director

On 11 July 1961 the Brazilian police arrested a talented young German immigrant named Joseph Werner Leben who held a well-paid job in a São Paulo firm dominated by anti-Communists and North Americans. In his apartment they found photographic equipment, stationery treated chemically for secret writing, codes and ciphers, and a large amount of correspondence to and from an East Berlin intelligence office. He confessed to have been collecting and transmitting information on anti-Communist activities in São Paulo, the political situation in Brazil and attitudes toward Cuba and other Latin American countries, and North American infiltration of Brazilian industry, as well as to have been making contacts in the North American colony and in the customs

offices with a view to future requirements. One of his most recent messages had alerted his superiors to a secret meeting of prominent anti-Communists, including the president of the firm he worked for as art director, Vladimir Landzzensky, to be held on 6 July at the Hotel Hampshire in New York.

Leben's career as an agent had got off to a jerky start. He first fell in with officers of the East German service at the 1956 Leipzig fair, but he left for Brazil on his own shortly thereafter without having been approached for recruitment. They kept in touch by mail, however, and soon he was invited back for an expense-free visit, during which he signed up, was advanced some $1,500, and acquired the cover name "Armando." He went again to Brazil in December 1956 to begin his intelligence activities, but in October 1958 was recalled for further training at Fontanastrasse 17A, so that his real work did not begin until early 1959. In the end, at least, he was considered an agent of considerable importance, getting some of his instructions direct from Gunter Lange, one of the top men at headquarters, and having received for his services more than $10,000. He was to transfer to the United States when he turned thirty and would no longer be liable to the draft.

Normally his communications were by ostensible love letter first to one Rita Goether and then, with an abrupt switch of affections, to an Ursula Perkel, who was so callous as to marry a man named Wessel while the amorous correspondence was going on. The secret messages were carried in invisible writing or on a microdot under the stamp. He had documentation for two false identities in case he had to make a get-away. If he should go to Berlin, he was to telephone his lady love and say "Armador. Armador. Armador," and hang up. He was to tease her thus twice more, but on the third time listen for instructions for a rendezvous.

While the police were arresting him before breakfast on that July morning, a special-delivery letter came. No microdot, no secret writing; but two words of gibberish were buried in the text, "Placard—Stafet." "Placard" meant to burn all his documents, "Stafet" to disappear. But in East Berlin poor Ursula waited long hours at the telephone in vain.

Gangster Agent

Herz Liberman began his long and eminent criminal's career as a Warsaw teen-ager; he was arrested there for theft in 1930. At the age of thirty, now a tailor by nominal vocation, the avocational skill he had acquired served him well: while all the rest of his family perished in the Nazi gas chambers he managed to escape from Dachau. Between 1945 and 1948 he served two jail terms for theft in Western Europe. Late in 1948 he went to Berlin, became active in counterfeiting circles, was arrested and jailed in West Berlin. In April 1951 he sawed through his cell bars and escaped to East Berlin, where he still lives.

In East Berlin Liberman established a working arrangement with the East German intelligence service. In return for professional services like kidnapping, jail-springing, and burglary he was granted protection for a big operation in illegal trading. In both fields of endeavor he was aided immeasurably by his old membership in the fraternity of "Die Starken," a loose grouping of international criminals, mostly Polish Jews who had survived the concentration camps. The Berlin chapter, some 60 strong, had ties to a larger one in Frankfurt am Main and others in Munich and elsewhere. Die Starken gradually came to dominate East-West smuggling, specializing at first in luxury goods small enough to be carried across on the Berlin elevated. Through its itinerant members Liberman had access to underworld rings—and often, through some who had gone respectable but retained the old school tie, to business circles—in practically every Western country.

Liberman's black market ring, which controlled the movement of almost all goods within its field and dealt directly with the official East German trading organization, had the following establishments in East Berlin: a main warehouse handling coffee, faked American cigarettes, stockings, faked gold watches, liquor, and possibly narcotics; a warehouse in Lichtenberg mainly for textiles; a warehouse in Weissensee to take care of small shipments of strategic minerals; and an export-import firm on Friedrichstrasse dealing in optical equipment and office machines. From late 1956, however, this empire began to disintegrate under the effects of a police

roundup of confederates in West Berlin and West Germany, a waning demand for its faked or shoddy goods, and a new squeamishness on the part of East German intelligence about using the violent type of covert service it offered. Most of its members stayed in illegal East-West trade, but they shifted from black-market luxuries to embargoed strategic goods.

The following are some of the services which Liberman is known to have rendered East German, Soviet, or Polish intelligence: two successful jailbreaks from West Berlin; three successful and one attempted kidnapping; two attempted murders; three efforts to penetrate the West Berlin police; purchase of a West Berlin garage to provide cars for agent activities; a series of successful burglaries of the card files of organizations processing Soviet refugees; the recruitment of individuals well placed to procure identity documents, foreign passports, military maps, and U.S. MP uniforms for use in kidnappings; the recruitment of skills in car-stealing, counterfeiting, and smuggling weapons into East Berlin.

A Way with Children

Sybille Wambach was that great rarity, the perfect domestic—personable, industrious, intelligent yet modest, friendly but discreet, and wonderful with children. Her family lived in the East Zone, but she had preferred to stay in the West with her uncle, a professor of philosophy at Tuebingen. Not wishing to become a parasite, however, she had gone to Munich in October 1957 to find a job. She never lacked for work. When one U.S. Air Force family was transferred back home, another would be waiting for her eagerly. Or a Department of the Army civilian, who would marvel at how quiet she kept the kids while he caught up on his office work at home. Between jobs she might make a short visit to her family in the East.

In February 1959, much to the regret of the U.S. community in Munich, she moved to Bonn, where she worked in the homes of U.S. embassy officials, one after another as their tours expired. All were tempted by her offer to come with them back to the States, although they knew they couldn't afford her there.

In June 1961 her employer took for her a telephoned message that her mother was very ill and she should come home immediately. She left right away, her usual calm competence a bit disturbed. Next day she telephoned to say her mother had had a heart attack but she would be back in a few days. Three days later she called again; she would have to stay a little longer. Then a third postponement, most apologetic. No, they needn't forward her mail; she would be back soon. Yet another call: this a woman's voice asking that Sybille be told she is urgently expected. Expected where? Who's calling, please? Click.

The mail she left might have been forwarded to her at the offices of the East German intelligence service, Hauptverwaltung II (Aufklaerung). The same defection therefrom that brought the confusion of Sybille's hasty exit gave us—too late—the information that she had been picked up from an East Zone kindergarten in early 1957, trained as an agent, sent to live with her uncle to get West German documentation, and then loosed against the Americans. The defector didn't know what success she had had in Bonn, but from Munich she had reported on the morale of the U.S. forces, their training exercises, and the combat readiness of the 7th Army. At the time of the 1958 Iraqi coup she had flashed the prized information that U.S. paratroops had been alerted and the 7th Army told to stand by.

The Hustlers

The Hans Kesslers, father and son, of Kesko Limited are West German businessmen with excellent contacts in the munitions and chemical industries and a penchant for supplying strategic materials to the East Bloc. They have been arrested twice, but the evidence has not been firm enough to convict them. In 1953, while drumming up trade in East Berlin, the elder Kessler made a deal with a member of the Polish Trade Delegation—actually a UB(Polish State Security) officer—to provide intelligence information in exchange for business with the Poles. Thereafter, at meetings in East Berlin and Warsaw, they arranged a number of profitable business deals, and Kessler was also paid in cash 10,000 West German marks and another $1,000 for expenses.

In 1957 Kessler told his UB friend that he had an American source from whom he could get plans and sample parts of the American bomber "Hustler"; he would want $100,000 and expenses. He could ship the parts through contacts in Teheran. This was too big a deal for the Poles to handle by themselves, and they called in the Soviet KGB. The Soviets were skeptical, but they agreed to the conditions and took over the case.

The further course of this transaction is shrouded from us in the mystery wrapped in an enigma; but it was presumably consummated. The "American source" would have been John Diess, a German-born Canadian citizen who was arrested in 1958 for shipping from the United States other embargoed equipment to Kesko Limited in Frankfurt. In 1959 there were seen in Kessler's briefcase the complete blueprints of an American warplane, along with data on West German mine detectors. And subsequently the old hustler was told by General Romanov of the Soviet embassy in Vienna, not as privately as they thought, that $100,000 had been deposited for him in the Paris Banque du Nord.

The Million Dollar Split

Henryk Kowalski had been an officer of the UB counterintelligence department since 1946. One of his early missions had been to organize an escape route from Poland through East Germany to the West, lead out a group of refugees, and offer the facility to Western intelligence, whose subsequent operations along it could then be monitored by the UB. The UB, however, had neglected to coordinate this stratagem with its East German counterpart (a frequent oversight) and Kowalski's entire group was arrested by the East German police. It took a Russian officer and word from Warsaw to get them out of jail and deported back to Poland.

From 1953 to 1957 Kowalski's assignment was that of fence in smuggling operations and other illegal transactions designed to provide funds for UB activities and incidentally to line the pockets of his superior, Lt. Col. Henryk Zmijewski, and other senior officers. He would, for example, make "pleasure tours" of Western Europe, where he would dispose of works of art acquired by black market deals in Poland. In 1957 Zmijewski asked him to set up a store in Gdynia which might be used as a place for meeting foreign seamen of interest to the

UB and from which the profits might be split between them and the UB man in Gdynia.

In 1958 Kowalski was given the job of striking up an acquaintance with a man in Berlin whom the UB suspected of connections with the French intelligence service. He found not one but two who might have such connections, but the UB's intelligence interest in them was deflected by a business deal which they proposed: could Kowalski buy in Poland a million dollars worth of machine guns, carbines, machine pistols, mortars, and ammunition for shipment through an unnamed buyer in Luxembourg to "an African country?" Zmijewski and his superiors, discussing this proposal with Deputy Premier Jaroszewicz and Foreign Trade Minister Trampczynski, found that Poland did not have the materiel wanted. But Bulgaria would be able to fill the order, and General Koderko of the Ministry of Foreign Trade suggested that Poland act as middleman, retaining enough control of the transaction to make sure of a healthy commission.

Kowalski remained in Berlin in contact with the buyer's agents, reporting to Warsaw through the UB office. He and Zmijewski agreed that the size of his own commission on the deal should be concealed from their superiors, a small amount being deposited in Warsaw but the bulk of it secreted in the West, where it would be available to the two of them. This plethora of hungry middlemen in the deal, however, and the unwillingness of any of them to undercut his own position by identifying the buyer rapidly created enormous complications in the negotiations, and the buyer eventually gave up this channel for procurement.

The People's Choice

Alfred Frenzel, Socialist deputy in the West German Bundestag since 1953, chairman of its Restitution Committee, member of its Defense Committee, had been born at the turn of the century in what is now Czechoslovakia, and he had once upon an immature and happily forgotten time been a member of the Communist party. In April 1956 officers of the Czech intelligence service got to him. They reminded him where his true national loyalties lay, they talked darkly of how his constituency would react to hearing about his Com-

munist past, they made him dazzling financial offers. He succumbed.

For more than four years Frenzel was a most important source of information for the Czechs, who shared their harvest with the Poles and Soviets. Meeting with Czech officers in Berlin and elsewhere—his contacts went as high as Bohumil Molnar, first deputy of the foreign intelligence directorate—he reported on the Federal Republic's armed forces and its NATO activities, revealed the deliberations and policy decisions of the Socialist Party leadership, and supplied information to facilitate the recruitment of other high-ranking Germans, especially those who had families or close friends in the East. He was also useful in an active sense, for example to campaign among Socialists and before the public for the demilitarized zone in central Europe proposed by the Polish government. Occasionally he could even help in other operations, as when his Restitution Committee awarded a settlement of 60,000 marks to one Kurt Sitte, who was later arrested in Israel for those same espionage activities for which this was compensation.

Frenzel's work for the adversary, one of the most serious breaches ever made in the security of the Federal Republic, was halted by his arrest in October 1960, and six months later he was sentenced to fifteen years at hard labor.